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Mindanao, Island of Romance



By

FRANK C. LAUBACH



OUTLINE MAP OF THE PHILIPPINE GROUP
For Mission Stations see Map on page nineteen.

MINDANAO, ISLAND OF ROMANCE

Our Responsibility in the Philippines

By FRANK C. LAUBACH, Ph.D.



DR. LAUBACH

I KNOW it is romantic for I have shared its romance. Thirteen years ago Mrs. Laubach and I sailed down from Manila, past lovely little islands green with waving palms until at last, far across the shimmering sea, arose the dim outlines of the fairest island of them all. That was one of the tensest moments of my life. I remember how my heart beat, how my throat was too tight for words, how my soul soared! You do not understand, for you have not been there. But go ask Secretary Bell. He

visited us once. He understands.

He nearly lost his life — or thought he did — in our launch on treacherous Mindanao Sea. He witnessed ex-criminals blazing with passion for Jesus Christ. He visited the spot where José Rizal, one of the world's rare noble souls, spent weary years of his exiled life on the rock-bound shores of Dapitan Bay. Frank Woodward and Julius Augur and Proculo Rodriguez and Agapito Raagas and I were with Enoch Bell that sacred evening. Our voices were hushed as we landed. We proceeded in silence to the spot where Rizal's house once stood. Silently we walked over the paths Rizal had built and gazed at the fountains and canals he and his students had constructed. We were all praying. Rizal's spirit was there.

If you had known Rizal you would place a statue in his memory at Washington just as the British have placed a statue in honor of Lincoln in front of Westminster Abbey. You rule the Philippines. You will decide when the Philippines shall be free. Yet you do not know that they produced a man as great in spirit as Lincoln, as great in vision, in passion, in unselfishness, in ability, in sacrifice. Rarely since our Master set his face to go

to Jerusalem and the cross has any man laid down his life so deliberately as did Rizal. You must know Rizal or you cannot know my Mindanao.

He was a genius. His parents sent him to Europe to complete his studies. He shone in Madrid, in Paris, in London, in Berlin.



RIZAL, PATRIOT AND MARTYR

He learned to speak fifteen languages. He was a gifted painter and sculptor, a physician and an oculist, while his own country was seething with revolt. Filipinos were being shot or exiled almost daily. Many of them escaped to Europe and behind the secret doors of the Masonic lodges planned the overthrow of the Spanish régime. Rizal dared to oppose revolt and to insist that only by education and character could the Filipinos deserve freedom or keep it if they had it. The Filipinos must become worthy, and the idealistic people in Spain must be persuaded. That was his gospel.

He wrote a novel exposing the atrocities of the Spanish rule (in English, named the "Reign of Greed") which William Dean Howells pronounced the greatest novel of the nineteenth century in any language. It made Rizal at once the best loved and the worst hated man in the Philippines. He was out of reach of the authorities whom he condemned, so they took their vengeance upon his relatives.

Rizal came home. Before sailing across the China Sea to Manila he left two letters in Hongkong, "to be opened" he wrote

on the outside "after my death." Hear what he says: "I know that hardly anyone comprehends what is in my heart. The future of my country pivots in some degree around me. In my death many of its enemies will feel triumph. But I hold duty to conscience above all else. What matters death if one die for what he loves! Always I have loved our unhappy land and I shall continue to until my last moments. Life, career, happiness, I am ready to sacrifice for her. I shall die blessing her and longing for the dawn of her redemption." And so he sailed for Manila.

A few weeks later he was banished to Dapitan, Mindanao. For four years he lived at the lovely lonely spot to which we now make pilgrimage. Rizal filled Mindanao with his passion, his poetry, his love, his immeasurable agony. Rizal gave Mindanao its romance.

Then he returned to Manila — and his death. The night before his execution he wrote one of the sweetest poems in the Spanish language, surely the most heart-gripping:

I die — yet see! the skies glow overhead
Announcing day at last beyond the night!
And should you need to stain the dawn with red,
Behold my blood is for this purpose shed, —
To dye incarnadine thy natal light.

E'er yet my childhood changed to youth, I dreamed
As youth will dream when vigor courses strong,
One day to see my Orient jewel redeemed,
Her dark eyes dried, her brow no longer seamed,
Her face uplifted, smiling, freed from wrong!

Sweet vision! living hope! undying fire!
"God-speed!" this soul cries out that soon must die:
"God-speed!" Oh, just to fall and lift thee higher,
To breathe new life on thee as I expire
And then in thy charmed arms forever lie!

Land I adore, whose sadness makes me grieve;
Dear Philippines! my last farewell again!
With thee, my kindred, friends, and all I leave,
To go where none are slaves and none deceive,
Where faith kills not, and God alone doth reign.

Daybreak, the rattle of bayonets, a walk to Bagumbayan Field, a jeering throng of triumphant enemies, the crack of rifles and it is finished.

It is begun! Today every boy and girl knows that poem. Today the handsome face of the young martyr is seen at the center of every plaza of every city and village in the Philippines. One immortal dead youth has done more for the soul of the Philippines than any other person save Christ, — and Rizal learned his secret from Calvary.

Mindanao of Today

This, you may say, is too sentimental for solid, practical America. Then we are hopeless; then we shall never understand the Filipino people; for they are romantic, sentimental, even a little melancholy. They understand Rizal, for they are like him. At their best they are willing, they are anxious, to pay a price for their country.

This is the atmosphere, at least the best atmosphere, one finds in every corner of Mindanao. There are many, to be sure, who have visited the island without ever suspecting that they were in a land like this. They were looking for soil or oil or coal or forests, or perhaps rare plants or bugs, not for human hearts, and they saw only what they came to see. They were blind to the magic moonlight, deaf to the lover's serenade, irresponsive to the poetry which makes every Filipino an idealist.

But missionaries are there to deal with human life, there to find the good and save it, to find the bad and aid in destroying it. If you look at Mindanao through our eyes you will see a million potential Rizals.

Swiftly we must glance at Mindanao as she was and come at once to Mindanao as she is, and as she is becoming. When Spain left her she was split into three almost water-tight compartments: the southeastern part of the island, the north coast and "Moroland," roughly speaking the territory between Lake Lanao and Zamboanga.

The Davao Field

The Southeastern third contained pagans, fifteen tribes of them, roaming from the coast to the mountain tops. Robert Black, our first missionary, spent twelve years of his life at Davao among the Bagobos, fostering schools and training boys for future leaders. Before me lies a letter which has just come from him. He has never thrown off the romance of Davao, and if malaria had not worn Mrs. Black to a shadow they would be there yet. There, too, Dr. Sibley opened a hospital and gave six of his best years.

Dr. Brokenshire, our new missionary doctor, found a very different Davao. A village has been sprawling out through the swamps and over the hills into

a city! Heart of the hemp industry of the world, rapidly becoming rich in coconuts and rubber, emblematic of Mindanao, the land of the future. Twenty-five languages are heard on the streets. Children from the forests of the far interior walk wide-eyed gazing upward in amazement at skyscrapers four stories high! Intense Moros with bloodshot eyes examine every passerby as though he were a potential menace. Ten thousand Japanese, five thousand Chinese, a hundred Americans, another hundred of Spaniards. All the problems and vices of a frontier mushroom city are there, with interest. Our Mission led a campaign which closed the licensed houses and drove their inmates to cover or out of the province, three years ago.



DR. BROKENSHIRE
Began work 1926



PEDRO SANTOS, M. D.
Davao Hospital

Fighting Malaria

Pernicious malaria is more prevalent in this rich and deadly district than anywhere else in Mindanao. The dread disease which attacks a vital organ and sends one to the grave or the



A FILIPINA NURSE

madhouse in a day, fills more beds in our hospitals than all other diseases combined. Dr. Brokenshire and his Filipino associates, Dr. Santos and Dr. Baldomera Esteban, a woman specialist for women and children, work wonders every day. Men and women are hurried to the mission hospital. Into the largest vein in the arm is plunged fifty grains of quinine—enough to kill a well man — and an hour later the unconscious patient opens his eyes. The next day he wants to go home, feeling weak but well!

Now Dr. Brokenshire is taking journeys into unknown areas of Mindanao where never yet white men have gone. He takes with him two hundred dollars worth of quinine and with it works miracles—this wonder medicine man! The primitive people are learning that he wants them to hurry to Davao and be cured instead of lying down and piteously surrendering to *kismet!*

Last year there were 1,398 patients in the hospital beds, another 3,138 in the dispensary. Fifty-nine of the 307 surgical cases were major operations. The hospital consists of the original main building and the ells and rooms added from time to time. These were built hastily because urgently needed, the latest addition being a new home for the woman doctor and the

nurses. The continued interest of a "patron saint" has made this extension possible.

For ten years Rev. and Mrs. Augur have been located at Davao supervising schools and churches in this field. Incidentally Mr. Augur gave much time to the administration work of the hospital when it was without an American doctor.

One of the prettiest chapels in Mindanao is the Davao Evangelical Church. Other churches have been finished in Binaton among the dainty, long-haired, lady-like Bagobos; at Pikit among the Moros and Filipino immigrants and at Santa Cruz, the rich hemp plantation. The Bagobos of Tugbuk are building a chapel, beginning at the top, so they can finish the rest of the building away from sun and rain.

The problem on the coast is to fight for Christian idealism in an area which receives immigrants in boatloads of hundreds every week, good and bad, Christian, Moslem, Buddhist, Shintoist, nothing. It is a never-finished task; they come, they leave rich, or they moulder under the sod — victims of dysentery, cholera, or, above all, pernicious malaria. The problem in the interior is to lift the primitive people out of a gentle, helpless barbarism into



NEW CAGAYAN HOSPITAL BUILDING WITH DOCTOR'S RESIDENCE

Completed under the direction of Dr. Floyd O. Smith, it serves patients from all along the north coast. Miss Florence L. Fox is head nurse.



MOHAMMEDAN (MORO) MOSQUE, LANA O, MINDANAO

Christian civilization, and to protect them from the vices and exploitation of civilized leaches.

For the Young People

Three schools have done more for the Bagobos than all the other influences that ever touched that tribe. The last ten years have seen the fruitage. Educated young men and girls have led their tribe in discriminating between the good and bad of civilization. We are teaching the Bagobos to save themselves through their own children. The school work is strictly practical. It conforms to the demands of the bureau of education so the brighter pupils may go on to the higher schools, but it aims to meet definite agricultural, industrial, social and spiritual needs.

Mrs. Augur organized the first officially registered troop of Girl Scouts in the Islands. This troop has taught girls how to combine high ideals of character with wholesome love of outdoors and exercise. They are learning also the dignity of labor and the beauty of nature, all of which were neglected under the Spanish rule.

Every Saturday afternoon Mr. Augur's sixty Boy Scouts and Mrs. Augur's Girl Scouts have been in the habit of coming to the Augur home on Madupo Hill to hold their meetings. Here the boys learn to practice, as well as to hear, new high ideals of reverence for womanhood, a thing unknown to the Spanish régime. These young folks will be the backbone of the new church generation.

Not the least important is the contact with the three hundred public school teachers of the Province. The Augurs furnish them with good Christian books and magazines. When they go to the wild, lonely places they prize and almost memorize these books. Many find Christ in this way. Others are kept from falling.

Mr. and Mrs. Peruganon were teaching in Davao when Mr. Peruganon heard the call to the ministry and sent his resignation to the Bureau of Education in Manila. Back came the following cable, "Tell Mr. Peruganon we greatly appreciate his services and offer him double salary to remain." Mr. Peruganon

replied, "I am happy to know you desire me to remain, but my call to Christian service cannot be refused for considerations of money or position." He is now preparing for the ministry, one of those glorious young people who are living enthralled with the dream of making of the nation they love a model for Asia — and the world! One Peruganon alone would be worth the life-time of a missionary.

The Northern Coast

All across the Northern Coast of Mindanao stretch the towns and cities of the Christian Filipinos. They are largely the descendants of the exiles of the Spanish period, men and women of the fibre of Rizal. How often have political exiles been the backbone of new nations! Mindanao has received the most daring and fearless Filipinos into her bosom — selected by persecution.

The moment the United States drove Spain from the Philippines, the Filipinos drove the Spanish friars from Mindanao and broke the Roman Catholic Church in two. More than half the people of Northern Mindanao still follow Bishop Aglipay in the Independent Church, in spite of the desperate efforts of the Roman Catholic Church to win them back.

The Independent and Evangelical Churches

My wife and I reached the town of Cagayan in 1915 and found the Independent Church strong in membership and weak in leadership. We sought to merge our movement with theirs and found the people very willing. Bishop Aglipay who lived in Manila, far from Mindanao, and who suspected our motives, refused to permit this co-operation. Reluctantly we built up our own congregation, though we remained very friendly to the local Independent Church and were constantly assured that "we were seeking the same great ends."

In 1921 when we were transferred to Manila, we became friendly with Bishop Aglipay who changed his position so much that he asked us to join his movement. Because he was then working in territory of the Missions with which we were co-

operating, our assistance of his church might have been construed as rivalry, so we refrained from accepting his invitation. Matters have changed, and it looks probable that we shall be able to cooperate and not wholly improbable that we may unite with the Aglipay movement in Mindanao. Think of a merger with a million and a half Filipinos!

Our own church has never been called Congregationalist because we did not desire to perpetuate denominational names.



MR. WOODWARD

We are called by the name which has been commonly accepted throughout the Islands "Evangelical." There are now fifty congregations worshipping under this name in northern Mindanao. Rev. Frank J. Woodward, with a heart of fire and a constitution of iron, has left the impress of his Christ-like spirit in every town and *barrio* of the whole north coast. Mrs. Woodward is loved as few women have been loved in that Island, loved because she is utterly forgetful of herself, incessantly thoughtful of others.

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Educating Ministers

Where to find ministers for the multiplying churches soon became our problem. Since they could not be found they had to be made. In 1921 our mission joined four other missions in the Union Theological Seminary in Manila. The standard of this institution has been pushed up in the past five years until it ranks with many of the good seminaries of the United States. Five hundred men and women are now studying in the high school, college and seminary departments of the institution. Mindanao gets one or two men from the seminary each year. But this is not enough for our needs.

We needed a school which could receive less well prepared men and give them two years training for the rural districts where the highly educated were not yet demanded. This has been



CAGAYAN SUNDAY SCHOOL CHILDREN AROUND A SAND PILE
Miss Evelyn Fox in center with Filipina workers on either side

supplied by our Silliman Bible School located at Dumaguete joining Silliman Institute, the Presbyterian College, but conducted by Congregationalists. Silliman is ranked by Dr. Speer as one of the five best mission colleges in the world. The Monroe Commission, after studying the schools of the Philippines, declared that the graduates of Silliman Institute stood above all others in character and achievements. Rev. Irving M. Channon of our mission is dean of the Bible School, ably assisted by Mrs. Channon.

Training Bible Women

But we still need women. Indeed, as Governor Wood was fond of saying, "The best men in the Philippines are the women." Frequently churches have said, "If we can't have both a man and a woman at once, send the woman first!" This is why Miss Evelyn Fox has a Bible School for Girls at Cagayan, graduating three or four beautiful Bible women each year. In the same building she has thirty other girls attending the Cagayan High School and unconsciously imbibing the Christian atmosphere of the Bible School. The Christian spirit is *caught* rather than taught, so dormitories for high school students are ideal for bring-



CARRUTH MEMORIAL HALL
Girls' Dormitory and Bible School

ing young people to Jesus. The directors of education have encouraged the missions to establish such dormitories for boys and girls beside every high school. We ought to have at least ten in Mindanao.



REV. PROCULO RODRIGUEZ, SURIGAO
Who represented his country at the Jerusalem Conference.

The Human Product

We are inordinately boastful of the splendid young men and women who have been going out from our schools. If I could do so, I should put them on a boat and parade them all over America as "Exhibit A" of the results of mission work. They would make their own ease. Rev. Procuro Rodriguez, Secretary of the Sunday School Union, chosen to represent the Philippines in the Peking Conference and again in the Jerusalem Conference, is

now losing himself in an effort to lift Surigao to a higher place. Rev. Donato Galia, valedictorian wherever he went, pastor of the Cagayan Church, is the first Filipino ever to secure the scholarship granted to one brilliant student a year from some foreign country by Union Theological Seminary of New York City. Rev. Matias Cuadra is a famous Moro minister, whose power and passion are becoming known, not only in the Philippines but throughout America. Rev. Cirilo del Carmen has, with the flaming fury of his clean soul, led in stamping the dens of vice out of Davao. Rev. Alfonso Quinones began the important and hazardous mission work among the Moros of Cotabato. Rev. Domingo Cineo is building his church into the heart of Buena Vista, the newest and most rapidly growing city of all the Philippines. He has a block in the center of the magnificently laid out city where one day there will no doubt rise a stately spire. The list is entirely too long to finish here.

Idealistic Youth

Suppose you ran across a nation somewhere on earth which believed that by following Christ and applying his ideals to all life



REV. AND MRS. ALFONSO QUINONES

Workers in the Cotabato region

they may lift their race higher than any race that has yet existed, would not that nation fill you with thrills? There is no such nation, so far as I know, but there is an ever-growing group of Christian youth in the Philippines which dares to dream that audacious dream. They are the young men and women pouring out of our Christian schools — these whom we named above and hundreds like them. They have caught a mighty vision and their souls are on fire. They have studied sociology with a purpose and are convinced that they can make out of the Philippines a race such as never was on sea or land. Every business, every school, every church they judge in the light of the Utopia of their dreams. Do you wonder that these young people are the most fascinatingly hopeful people to us who know them, of any in all the world.

Join a group of Filipinos with their brown skins and their flashing black eyes, and see whether you can detect in any of them this amazing ambition, not to rule the world, not to be powerful in material or military things, but to achieve a super-race in character and culture and religion. Dream that dream with them! What finer thing could America do for her "daughter republic" than to believe in her and aid her in her highest aspiration. It is the twentieth century counterpart of the idealism of Rizal.

The Only Moslems Under the American Flag

Fierce pirates of the Pacific, for centuries unconquered by the Spaniards, the Moros prevented Mindanao from being settled. Now they are conquered and thoroughly grateful to the United States for having prevented them from killing each other. Moroland is now as safe — well, as Chicago. The fortresses of living bamboo which once defended the Moros are all destroyed. Now they admire and even almost love Americans. Often I have had Moros say to me, "We hate Christians, but love you Americans!" To say that to a Christian missionary is a queer sort of compliment; yet it is true. Christianity meant to them Roman Catholicism with its images and adoration of Mary. Mohammedans



REV. MATIAS CUADRA, MORO MINISTER



CONFERENCE GROUP OF MORO STUDENTS

Dr. Laubach in center

abominate images. And even more they oppose a woman for a god. But Protestants seem to them very nearly Moslem.

One bright young man said: "We Moros see only two differences between Protestants and Moslems. We have four wives and you drink whiskey. But we are getting together fast. We are giving up polygamy and you are passing laws against whiskey. So, soon we can unite."

Some young Moros are joining our churches. The only reason they do not come in large numbers is that we have never yet put a single missionary among them. We do not have enough money. So the only thing we missionaries can do is to take our vacations by going and holding conferences among the Moros on the theory that a change of language is as good as a vacation. The governor of the province of Lanao has urged us to place a permanent missionary among the Moros, asserting that the solution of the difficult Moro question lies with missionaries more than with anybody else. So let's do it and that soon, or let some other mission do our work for us!

It is Ours

This Island of Mindanao is *ours* — ours because we are Americans, ours because we are Congregationalists and an agreement has been made with other denominations that we should cultivate this particular field. It is ours, not to hold nor to exploit, but to serve. Perhaps a truer way to put it is that we are theirs, for we owe them a heavy responsibility.



DETAILED MAP OF ISLAND ASSIGNED TO CONGREGATIONALISTS



THIS WAY TO THE HEART OF MINDANAO

The American Board of Commissioners
for Foreign Missions
14 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts

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